

REMARKS

Favorable reconsideration and withdrawal of the objections and rejections set forth in the above-mentioned Official Action in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks are respectfully requested.

Drawings

The drawings are objected to because the sole figure of the drawings should not be labeled "Fig. 1". In response, a Request for Approval to Amend the Drawings and Submission of Corrected Sheet of the Drawings is being filed concurrently herewith in which the legend "FIG. 1" is deleted. No new matter has been added. It is respectfully submitted that the objection to the drawings has been overcome.

Title

The title has been objected to as not being descriptive. In response, a new title, which is more clearly indicative of the claimed invention, is presented herein for the Examiner's consideration and approval.

Abstract

The Abstract of the Disclosure is objected to because of the inclusion of legal phraseology. In response, a new Abstract has been provided for the Examiner's consideration and approval.

Specification

The specification is objected to because of minor informalities noted by the Examiner. The specification has been amended to attend to any identified informalities, including those kindly identified by the Examiner. It is respectfully submitted that no new matter has been added.

Claims Status

Claims 1, 3 through 9, and 11 through 16 remain pending in the application. Claims 2 and 10 have been canceled. Claims 1, 3 through 9, and 11 through 16 have been amended to even more succinctly define the invention and/or to improve their form. It is respectfully submitted that no new matter has been added. Claims 1 and 9 are the only independent claims pending in the application.

Art Rejections

Claims 1 through 6, 8 through 14, and 16 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Japanese Patent Document No. 7-276782 (Ozeki, et al.).

Claims 7 and 15 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ozeki, et al. in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,588,888 (Jeanmaire, et al.).

The Official Action erroneously identifies the rejected claims. We contacted the Examiner, who confirmed that the rejected claims are those set forth above in paragraphs 5 and 6. The Examiner will prepare an Interview Summary Record to clarify the record, which we will forward upon receipt.

The rationale underlying the foregoing rejections is succinctly set forth in the Official Action. The rejections are respectfully traversed.

Response to Rejections

Amended Claim 1 calls for an image formation method for forming an image on a recording medium. The method includes a toner applying step for applying fusible powder toner to a recording medium to form a toner image. An ink applying step applies liquid ink containing a coloring material to the recording medium to form an ink image. A thermal fixing step thermally fixes an image formed by the toner applying step and the ink applying

step. A semi-fixing step, which is performed between the toner applying step and the ink applying step, semi-fixes the toner image.

The Examiner asserts that Ozeki, et al. discloses applying fusible powder toner to a recording medium and then applying liquid ink to the recording medium to form an ink image. With reference to the Abstract and Figure 8, the Examiner also asserts that Ozeki, et al. discloses thermally fixing an image formed by the first and second steps.

Ozeki, et al. is not understood to disclose thermally fixing a powder toner and ink to form an image. Based on the Abstract, Ozeki, et al. merely discloses a step of pressure-fixing an image formed by separately applying a toner and an ink in two preceding steps. In addition, Figure 8 of Ozeki, et al. is not understood to disclose that the “pressurizing fixing means 12b” includes a thermal component.

In addition, the fixing means 12 of Ozeki, et al. fully fixes the toner image. Ozeki, et al. applies ink after the toner image is fully fixed. Therefore, the ink on the toner image is not absorbed into the toner image and remains on the recording material as residual ink. As a result, Ozeki, et al. includes a means for removing the residual ink, i.e., shown in Figure 5 after an ink image formed on the toner image.

Amended Claim 1, calls for a step of semi-fixing the toner image to be performed between the toner applying step and the ink applying step. Since the toner image is semi-fixed, the toner particles are held by the recording medium with gaps between the particles. Consequently, the ink is absorbed into the gaps by capillary action. Accordingly, a wiping means is not necessary.

It is respectfully submitted that Ozeki, et al. does not disclose a thermally fixing step and a semi-fixing step to be performed between a toner applying step and an ink applying step as recited in amended Claim 1.

Amended independent Claim 9 calls for an image forming apparatus for forming an image on a recording medium. The apparatus includes first means applying fusible powder toner to a recording medium to form a toner image; second means applying liquid ink containing a coloring material to the recording medium to form an ink image; and third means for thermally fixing an image formed by the first and second means. The fixing means semi-fixes the toner image formed by the first means.

It is respectfully submitted that Ozeki, et al. does not disclose a thermal fixing means and a semi-fixing step means as recited in amended Claims 1 and 8, and therefore does not anticipate the invention recited in independent Claims 1 and 9.

Jeanmarie '888 is merely cited against dependent Claims 7 and 15 for disclosing an ink, which includes either an aqueous or non-aqueous solvent. It is respectfully submitted that Jeanmarie does not remedy the above-noted deficiencies of Ozeki, et al. *vis-à-vis* the claimed invention.

Dependent Claims

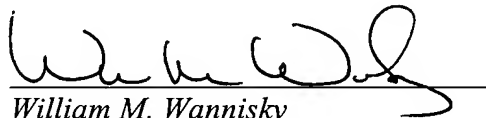
Claims 3 through 8 and 11 through 16 depend directly from one of Claims 1 and 9 and are allowable by virtue of their dependency and in their own right for further defining Applicant's invention. Individual consideration of the dependent claims is respectfully requested.

Closing Comments

It is respectfully submitted that the claims on file are allowable over the art of record and that the application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and early passage to issue of the present application are earnestly solicited.

Applicant's undersigned attorney may be reached in our Washington, D.C. office by telephone at (202) 530-1010. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our New York office at the address shown below.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'W. M. Wannisky', written over a horizontal line.

William M. Wannisky
Attorney for Applicant
Registration No. 28,373

FITZPATRICK, CELLA, HARPER & SCINTO
30 Rockefeller Plaza
New York, New York 10112-3801
Facsimile: (212) 218-2200

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